

Title: Effects of weather-related episodic events in lakes: an analysis based on high frequency data.

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Summary

1. Weather-related episodic events are typically unpredictable and their duration is often short. Abiotic and biological responses are often missed in routine monitoring. These responses are, however, now of particular relevance given projected changes in extreme weather conditions.
2. We present data from high frequency monitoring stations from lakes in Europe, North America and Asia that illustrate two classes of abiotic effects of weather events: (i) generally short-lived effects of storms on lake thermal structure and (ii) the more prolonged effects of high rainfall events on dissolved organic matter levels and water clarity. We further relate these abiotic effects to changes in dissolved oxygen or in chlorophyll *a* levels.
3. Three differing causes for weather-related decreases in surface dissolved oxygen levels were observed: (i) entrainment of anoxic water from depth, (ii) reduction in primary productivity, and (iii) increased mineralisation of organic carbon delivered from the catchment.
4. The duration of in-lake effects tended to be longer for events driven by weather conditions with a longer return period, that is, conditions which were relatively more severe and less frequent at a site. While the susceptibility of lakes to change was related in part to the severity of the meteorological drivers, the impacts also depended on site-specific factors in some cases.
5. The availability of high frequency data at these sites provided insight into the capacity of the lakes to absorb current and future pressures. Several of the changes we observed, including increases in carbon availability, decreases in PAR and increased disturbance, have the capacity to shift lakes towards an increased degree of heterotrophy. The magnitude and direction of any such change will, however, also

depend on the magnitude and direction of climate change for a given location, and on lake and catchment characteristics.

Introduction

The effects of episodic events have been a recurring theme in aquatic research in recent decades (Junk, Bayley & Sparks, 1989; Reid & Ogden, 2006; Wantzen, Junk & Rothhaupt, 2008). In lakes, events are characterised by abrupt changes in physical, chemical and/or biological parameters that are distinct from previous background levels and are often driven by sudden changes in weather, and in particular extremes in precipitation, wind or temperature. High wind speeds, for example, can cause a stratified lake to mix, resulting in a breakdown in stability and a concurrent increase in thermocline depth (Imberger, 1994). Mixing can, however, also be convectively driven: as surface waters cool, they become denser than the underlying water and induce convective stirring (MacIntyre, Eugster & Kling, 2001; MacIntyre, Romero & King, 2002; Eugster *et al.*, 2003). Intense precipitation may also result in physical disturbance of the water column (Yount, 1961; Jones *et al.*, 2007) and can be accompanied by a pulse in the export of dissolved and particulate substances to the lake (Weyhenmeyer, Willén & Sonesten, 2004; Arvola *et al.*, 2006). This potential for flood pulses to have an impact not only on rivers but also on recipient lake ecosystems is an aspect of weather-lake interactions that has often been ignored (Wantzen *et al.*, 2008). Flood events and mixing events may also co-occur during storms, compounding and amplifying the effects.

Biological responses to these episodic changes can be varied and complex and range from short-term, reversible changes to those that are more persistent. They can include changes in bacterial and phytoplankton community structure and productivity, and resultant changes in lake metabolism. Cyanobacteria generally dominate in lakes during calm, warm conditions for example, while diatoms and green algae are dominant at higher turbulent diffusivity (Huisman *et al.*, 2004; Jöhnk *et al.*, 2007; Wilhelm & Adrian, 2008). Wash-out of the

smallest fraction of plankton can also occur following high turbulence (Arvola *et al.*, 1996) or rainfall (Jones *et al.*, 2011). Relatively high levels of disturbance may sometimes result in only a short-lived biological response (Flöder & Sommer, 1999; Millie *et al.*, 2003; Paidere Gruberts & Škute 2007), possibly reflecting the tendency for maximum responses to occur at intermediate levels of disturbance (Connell, 1978). The biological impact of an episodic event may also be long-lived, particularly where concentrations of nutrients or coloured dissolved organic matter (CDOM) have increased. Primary production in Antarctic lakes, for example, was reduced during large flood events but increased in the following year due to resulting higher availability of nutrients (Foreman, Wolf & Priscu, 2004). Decreased light availability caused by increased CDOM concentrations following floods can also shift lake metabolism from autotrophy to heterotrophy for short or sometimes prolonged periods (Cotner, Johengen & Biddanda., 2000; Drakare *et al.*, 2002; Lohrenz *et al.*, 2004). Other longer-term consequences of episodic events include reductions in water clarity (Bachmann *et al.*, 1999) and shifts to turbid, phytoplankton dominated states (Hargeby, Blindow & Hansson, 2004; Scheffer & Jeppesen, 2007).

A greater insight into both short-term and long-term responses in lakes to abrupt changes in meteorological drivers is now of particular relevance given recent (Klein Tank & Können, 2003; Kunkel, Andsager & Easterling, 1999) and projected (Beniston *et al.*, 2007) changes in the severity and frequency of meteorological events. By definition these events are typically of short duration and are therefore easily missed by routine monitoring programs.

Developments in technology and increases in the number and type of lakes with high frequency monitoring stations, along with the human networks designed to analyse and synthesise high frequency data (for example, the Global Lake Ecological Observatory

Network - GLEON), now allow exploration of both the meteorological drivers of episodic events and their limnological consequences.

Here we analyse and synthesise the characteristics of episodic events using a combination of high and moderate frequency data from sites in Europe, the USA and Taiwan. Where data were collected at lower frequencies, high frequency data can aid in interpretation by providing a record of conditions between sampling occasions. The focal events had either resulted in observed responses in lake biota (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Ojala *et al.*, 2011) or were from sites where a sensitivity to current or future climatic extremes has been noted (Gaiser *et al.*, 2009a and b; Jennings & Allott, 2006; Staehr & Sand-Jensen, 2006; Jones and Elliott, 2007; Naden *et al.*, 2010). Specifically, we aimed to quantify the meteorological conditions that drive episodic events, and the magnitude and duration of effects on abiotic conditions, including thermal structure, CDOM levels and light availability. In addition, we assess the relationship between these changes and in-lake biological responses as indicated by chlorophyll *a*, dissolved oxygen data and gross primary productivity, and discuss the potential for longer-term effects on lake biota.

Methods

Study sites

For this study we collated high-resolution data from seven lakes: Belham Tarn (northwest England), Frederiksborg Slotssø (Denmark), Lough Leane (southwest Ireland), Lough Feeagh (west Ireland), Yuan Yang Lake (north-central Taiwan), Lake Annie (south-central Florida, US) and Lake Pääjärvi (southern Finland) (Table 1). The lakes encompass a range of areas, from 3.6 ha (Yuan Yang) to 1990 ha (Leane), and mean depths, from 1.7 m (Yuan Yang) to 14.5 m (Feeagh). They also range in trophic status from oligotrophic to eutrophic, based on chlorophyll *a* concentrations, and include both clear-water and coloured lakes (Table 1).

Three of the lakes, Belham, Leane and Slotssø, are clear-water lakes that are mesotrophic or eutrophic. Belham and Slotssø are persistently eutrophic, with a long stratified period from spring to late autumn, and a hypolimnion that is highly anoxic during the summer. Slotssø is fed by surface streams that deliver high concentrations of nutrients causing large summer algal blooms of up to 210 mg chlorophyll *a* m⁻³ (Staehr & Sand-Jensen, 2007). Leane also has high nutrient loading (Jennings & Allott, 2006) but is monomictic and is situated in a coastal region with a cool, oceanic climate: assessment of historical data has indicated that algal blooms only occur during times of unusually calm and warm water (H. Twomey, unpubl. data). The other four lakes are coloured by humic substances. Feeagh is also monomictic and has the same oceanic climate as Leane, but is coloured (mean annual colour c. 90-100 mg L⁻¹ PtCo) and oligotrophic. Pääjärvi is a deep, dimictic lake that is also oligotrophic and has high colour levels (c. 90 mg L⁻¹ PtCo) that drive steep thermal stratification during the short stratified period (June-August). Yuan Yang and Annie are both subtropical and monomictic. Yuan Yang is slightly coloured from input from its forested catchment that reduces light penetration, limiting algal production and increasing thermal stability. Annie is a

groundwater-fed lake but is also susceptible to pulses of CDOM from the catchment, causing transparency to vary as much as 8 m within a decade (Gaiser *et al.*, 2009a), depending on long-term rainfall cycles (Gaiser *et al.*, 2009b).

Instrumentation and Data

An automatic monitoring buoy stationed at the deep point of Blelham measured *in situ* lake temperatures at eight depths (Platinum Resistance Thermometer, Labfacility Ltd, Bognor Regis, UK), wind speed (Vector instruments A100L2-WR, Rhyl, UK) and other meteorological variables every four minutes; these data were combined for hourly averages. Monitoring data for an array of additional limnological variables, including dissolved oxygen (DO) concentration (WTW oxi 340i probe, WTW, Weilheim, Germany), were taken every metre at fortnightly intervals. High frequency meteorological data were measured every five minutes at a similar monitoring buoy situated at the deepest point in Leane, using the same instrumentation as used at Blelham. Water temperature profile data were measured every two minutes at twelve depths at the same point. The lake was also sampled at six sites on a weekly or fortnightly basis for a range of parameters, including dissolved oxygen concentration and chlorophyll *a* (APHA, 1992). The instrumented platform on Feeagh was also situated at the deepest point. Measured parameters included wind speed and water temperature at 12 depths using the same instruments as used on Blelham, and surface dissolved oxygen concentrations (Hydrolab/OTT hydrometry, Chesterfield, UK). CDOM fluorescence (Seapoint, Exeter, USA), a proxy for dissolved organic carbon (DOC) concentrations, was measured every two minutes on the Glenamong River, one of two main inflows which drains 18 km² of the 38 km² catchment. These data were converted to mg DOC L⁻¹ based on a relationship with DOC measured on a Shimadzu TOC 5000A analyser (Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, Columbia, USA) ($r^2 = 0.85$; $p < 0.0001$, $n = 50$). Stream

flow data (OTT hydrometry, Chesterfield, UK) were also available for the site while rainfall data were available from a meteorological station located on the shores of the lake. Wind speed, temperature and irradiance in air and oxygen, temperature and photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) were measured continuously at different depths in the water at Slotssø using sensors mounted on a floating raft in the centre of the lake and averaged every 10 minutes (Staehr & Sand-Jensen 2007). Weekly values of surface water chlorophyll *a* concentrations were also available.

Temperature profiles, wind speed and dissolved oxygen were measured every 10 minutes by an instrumented buoy installed at Yuan Yang. The buoy was equipped with a thermistor chain with sensors at seven depths (Apprise Technologies, Duluth, USA), a Greenspan DO100 dissolved oxygen sensor at the surface (TYCO Integrated Systems, Cambridge, United Kingdom), and an RM Young wind vane and anemometer to measure wind speed and direction (Campbell Scientific, Logan, USA). Additional meteorological data were collected at a nearby station (around 500 m from the buoy) including air temperature and rainfall (Campbell Scientific, Logan, USA). An automatic monitoring buoy stationed at the deepest point of Annie, installed in February 2008, measured water temperature profiles and surface concentrations of dissolved oxygen at 15 minute intervals. A meteorological station located within 2.5 km of the lake includes a tipping bucket rain gauge and 10 m anemometer, recording the total rainfall received and average 10-sec wind speed every 15 minutes. On Pääjärvi an automatic monitoring buoy stationed at the deep point of the lake measured *in situ* lake temperature profiles and meteorological variables, including net irradiance in air and PAR at 1 m water depth. The instrumentation was similar to that on Leane, Feeagh and Blelham. The measurements were carried out every 10-30 minutes. Additional monitoring data for an array of limnological variables, including DOC concentrations, were collected

from different depths of the water column at three to four weekly intervals. Inflowing river discharges were measured on a daily basis and DOC on a weekly basis. Precipitation was measured at the nearby meteorological station belonging to the Finnish Meteorological Institute.

Wind speeds were scaled to a 10 m reference height using the formulation of Amorochio and DeVries (1980). Depth of thermal stratification was analysed with an empirical curve-fitting equation (van Genuchten, modified by Rimmer *et al.*, 2005) for the measured temperature profiles:

$$T(z) = T_h + (T_e - T_h) \left(\frac{1}{1 + (\alpha \cdot z)^n} \right)^{\left(1 - \frac{1}{n}\right)}, \quad \text{eq. 1}$$

where T (°C) is temperature at depth z (m), T_e and T_h (°C) are temperatures at the surface and the lake bottom, respectively, α (m⁻¹) is a curve fitting parameter that determines the depth of thermal stratification and n (dimensionless) is a curve fitting parameter that controls the steepness of the temperature gradient in the metalimnion. T_e and T_h were defined as measured temperatures at the surface and bottom, respectively, and α and n were fitted to each temperature profile.

The thermocline depth (Z_{mix}) was defined as the depth with the maximal temperature gradient (Hutchinson, 1975), and was calculated from Eq. 1 as the plane where $d^2T/dz^2 = 0$:

$$Z_{\text{mix}} = \alpha^{-1} \left(1 - \frac{1}{n} \right)^{-1/n}, \quad \text{eq. 2}$$

The empirical curve fitting equation only applies to temperature profiles with thermal stratification. If surface water temperature was colder than 4 °C ($T_e < 4\text{ °C}$) or colder than the bottom temperature ($T_e < T_h$) the empirical Eq. (1) does not hold, and mixing depth was automatically set to maximal lake depth.

The stability of thermal stratification at the calculated thermocline depth was evaluated with the Brunt-Väisälä (BV) buoyancy frequency (N , s^{-1}):

$$N = \left(-\frac{g}{\rho_o} \frac{\delta\rho}{\delta z} \right)^{1/2}, \quad \text{eq. 3}$$

where g is gravitational acceleration (9.82 m s^{-2}), ρ_o is mean density of the water column (g cm^{-3}), $\delta\rho$ is change in water density (g cm^{-3}) over depth, δz is defined as the 0.5 m extension above as well as below the mixing depth (Gill, 1982). Water density (ρ , g cm^{-3}) was calculated from temperature (T , °C) according to Kalff (2002):

$$\rho = 1 - 6.63 \cdot 10^{-6} (T - 4)^2, \quad \text{eq. 4}$$

In Slotssø weekly sampling of chlorophyll *a* (Chl *a*) in the epilimnion and vertical light profiles provided a highly significant linear model of Chl *a* concentration (Chl *a*, $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$) as a function of light attenuation (K_D , m^{-1}): $\text{Chl } a = 0.297 K_D + 0.556$ ($r^2 = 0.98$, $p < 0.001$). Applying this model to daily estimates of light attenuation (see Staehr & Sand-Jensen, 2007) yielded daily estimates of Chl *a*. Oxygen concentrations recorded every 10 minutes in Slotssø

were used to calculate daily rates of gross primary production (GPP) according to Staehr *et al.* (2010).

Relative changes in BV buoyancy frequency, thermocline depth and DO levels were calculated as the number of standard deviations from the mean change. The return period (RP) for precipitation and wind speed was calculated as:

$$RP = n - 1/m \quad \text{eq. 5}$$

where n = the rank of the event and m = number of years in the record (Wilson, 1990).

Where the rank of an event was less than 1, a within season return time was calculated and expressed as a fraction of the number of days in that season. In that case n = the rank in days for the season in which event occurred, and m = days in that season e.g. for June, July, and August, $m = 92$.

Results

A total of 13 weather-related episodic events occurred in the seven lakes during the time periods examined (Table 2). These included single events in Blelham (UK), Annie (USA) and Feeagh (Ireland), two events each in Slotssø (Denmark), Pääjärvi (Finland) and Leane (Ireland), and four events in Yuan Yang (Taiwan). All occurred between June and October. The drivers of the episodic events were either increases in wind speed, increases in precipitation, or a combination of both (Table 2). With the exception of one of the four events at Yuan Yang, all meteorological conditions were greater than two standard deviations from the seasonal mean (Table 2). The impacts of these extremes in weather conditions manifested themselves as changes in lake thermal structure and stability, changes in DOC

loading and underwater PAR levels, or changes in DO concentration and primary productivity.

Effects on lake thermal structure and stability

Mixing resulted in changes in lake water temperature profiles (Fig. 1a to d) and water column stability (Fig. 2e to 2h) following all events, with the exception of Pääjärvi (not shown), the deepest lake, where the two high rainfall events in the summer 2004 had no impact on stratification. A mixing event in Blelham in early September 2006 was driven by winds of about 4 m s^{-1} (Fig. 1a and c; Table 2). In contrast, a series of four mixing events in Yuan Yang in the summer of 2005 were principally related to high precipitation (daily precipitation of 103 mm day^{-1} to 443 mm day^{-1}) during tropical storms (Fig. 1b and d; Table 2). In Blelham, the sharp increase in turbulent wind energy flux, together with a reduction in surface heating due to overcast conditions, coincided with a decrease in the temperature difference between the surface and deep water from 4.6°C to 1.6°C in a little over half a day (Fig. 1c). There was also an increase in the dissolved oxygen concentration at a depth of 5m, suggesting the entrainment of oxygenated water from the mixed layer. The recovery in stratification to over a 4°C temperature difference took about two weeks (Fig. 1c). In Yuan Yang, the temperature difference between the surface and deep waters was between 4°C and 6°C during periods of stratification but was reduced to zero following each of the four precipitation events (Fig. 1d). The dissolved oxygen concentration of the surface water also decreased during mixing. However, as with Blelham, the lake restratified relatively rapidly (5-8 days) after each event (Fig. 1c and d; Table 2).

Wind driven mixing events also occurred in Slotssø (Fig. 2a and e) and Leane (Fig. 2b and f). In Slotssø, both mixing events occurred in the autumn. Elevated wind speeds of 4.4 m s^{-1} to

5.7 m s⁻¹ occurred between 28 August 2006 and 4 September 2006; a second period of high wind speeds was centered on 6 October (Fig. 2a). These episodes, which occurred when air temperatures were declining, caused an immediate decrease in water column stability, and a concurrent deepening of the thermocline (Fig. 2e). The Brunt Väisälä (BV) buoyancy frequency, a measure of water column stability, did not return to pre-event levels after this, but remained at approximately 0.085 s⁻¹ until the second mixing event in October, after which it declined to 0.004 s⁻¹.

The first mixing event in Leane occurred during a period of high wind speeds of 5 m s⁻¹ to 9 m s⁻¹ in late June 1997 (Fig. 2b). Water column stability (BV) decreased from 0.067 s⁻¹ to 0.025 s⁻¹, while the thermocline deepened from 15 m to 21 m (Fig. 2f). As with the events in Blelham and Yuan Yang, the lake restratified relatively rapidly, with both stability and thermocline depth returning to pre-event levels within 17 days. A second mixing event in Leane in late August was driven by higher wind speeds of 10.9 m s⁻¹. Thermocline depth did not recover following this event and continued to decline over the following weeks (Fig. 2f).

In Annie and Feeagh, mixing was related to the combined pressures of high precipitation rates and high wind speed. Tropical Storm Fay began to pass over Annie on 18 August 2008 with maximum rainfall occurring on 19 August (Fig. 2c and Table 2). By 22 August the lake had received approximately 152 mm of rainfall over 4 days and experienced 5 minute average wind speeds up to 8 m s⁻¹. Water column stability declined immediately after the storm from 0.168 s⁻¹ to 0.143 s⁻¹ and remained lower than pre-storm values throughout the following week (Fig. 2g). This resulted in a deepening of thermocline from 7 m to 9 m until 28 August. In Feeagh, high rainfall (40 mm day⁻¹) on 23 June 2004 was also the initial driver of mixing (Fig. 2d). This high rainfall was followed by an increase in wind speeds from 4.3

m s^{-1} to 8.6 m s^{-1} on 24 June 2004. The water column stability (BV) decreased from 0.074 s^{-1} to 0.065 s^{-1} before increasing slowly over the next five weeks (Fig. 2h). The thermocline depth declined from 15 m to 22 m, and in contrast to all other mixing events, remained at approximately this lower depth for the rest of the summer until the lake fully mixed in late September.

Effects on DOC loading and underwater PAR variations

High rainfall also resulted in a rapid influx of coloured dissolved organic matter at some sites. In addition to the effects on lake stability and thermocline depth described above, Tropical Storm Fay caused a rapid reduction in light transmission as measured by underwater PAR in groundwater-fed Annie (Fig. 3a). The reduction in light transmission occurred rapidly, had a curvilinear relationship to cumulative precipitation, and continued to decline after peak rainfall on 19 August 2008 ($r^2 = 0.84$; $p < 0.001$). The percentage transmission decreased from 63% to 45% within five days of the storm. The effect of the storm on underwater PAR levels persisted for 56 days. At Pääjärvi, discharge in the period June to August 2004 was nearly double the long-term average (from 1972 to present). The increase was primarily related to two high rainfall events, one on 30 June 2004 (45 mm day^{-1}) and one on 20 July 2004 (50 mm day^{-1}). The DOC load to the lake (Fig. 3b) peaked as a result of both increasing discharge and higher DOC concentrations of the inflowing water (not shown). Two large pulses in the export of DOC led to a decrease in the ratio of underwater to surface PAR by a factor of 1.9 (Fig. 3b). Underwater PAR levels did not return to pre-event levels until August of 2005. In-lake DOC concentrations or PAR levels were not available for Feeagh, however the DOC load associated with the event in June 2004 was $189 \text{ kg DOC km}^{-2} \text{ day}^{-1}$ (Fig. 2l). In contrast, similar and higher DOC loads were associated with relatively low rainfall later in

the summer: for example, two days with rainfall of 9 and 18 mm day⁻¹ in late August had loads of 165 and 268 kg DOC km⁻² day⁻¹ respectively.

Effects on dissolved oxygen levels, chlorophyll a levels and primary production

Three differing patterns of change in dissolved oxygen levels were observed following the changes in meteorological conditions. In Annie (Fig. 2k), surface water DO concentrations dropped rapidly by 1 mg L⁻¹ (from about 100% to 85% saturation) during mixing but then returned to their pre-event levels within 10 days. This decrease was coincident with the increase in wind speed and precipitation, and the decline in water column stability and in thermocline depth (Fig. 4a), indicating entrainment of deoxygenated water from depth. A similar reduction in surface water DO levels and subsequent rapid reoxygenation occurred following all four events in Yuan Yang (Fig. 1d). In Feeagh, surface water DO levels declined only slightly, from about 105% prior to the event to 97% immediately after, but then continued to decline steadily over the next two months. This slower decline coincided with continued DOC loading in the in-flowing stream (Fig. 3l). In this case, BV buoyancy frequency declined on the day of the high rainfall (23 June), while thermocline depth decreased over the subsequent days: however there was no decline in DO levels concurrent with mixing (Fig. 4b).

In contrast, the initial decrease in the DO content of the upper mixed layer in Slotssø was coincident with the decline in gross primary production (Fig. 2i). The first mixing event in Slotssø began during an algal bloom that was characterized by hypertrophic chlorophyll *a* levels (150 to 175 mg Chl *a* m⁻³). DO levels decreased from more than 125% DO to about 70% DO. This decline occurred on the first day on which wind speeds increased (28 August 2006), while the increase in thermocline depth occurred following a second increase in wind

speed on 5 September (Fig. 2a and 2e; Fig. 4c). However, chlorophyll *a* levels remained relatively high (60-70 mg Chl *a* m⁻³) after the period of higher wind speed and epilimnetic dissolved oxygen levels returned to supersaturated levels (100% to 125%) within three days of wind speeds declining. The lake became fully mixed during the second event in October: surface water DO levels again declined to 50% saturation but then remained low.

The hypolimnion was not deoxygenated in Leane prior to the mixing event in June 1997 and, therefore, no reduction in epilimnetic DO levels occurred (Fig. 2j). This period coincided with unusually clear skies (Fig. 2b) and, while Chl *a* remained low, surface DO levels rose from 103% to 129% (Fig. 2j). In mid August, following another unusually bright and calm day (cloud cover 1 okta, wind speed 1.2 m s⁻¹) high Chl *a* concentrations (118 mg m⁻³), identified as a bloom of the cyanobacterium *Anabaena flos-aquae*, were recorded. These coincided with a peak in surface water temperatures (maximum 20 °C) and high water column stability (Fig. 2f). Chlorophyll concentrations declined following the second mixing event in late August. Following deposition of this bloom, anoxic conditions were recorded in the bottom waters of the lake (Fig. 2j). They remained anoxic until November of that year.

Relative magnitude and duration of episodic events

The reduction in BV frequency coefficient was linearly related to precipitation for the four mixing events in Yuan Yang and the events in Feeagh and Annie (Fig. 5a). The high rainfall levels which drove the events in Yuan Yang (all >103 mm day⁻¹), although extreme in general terms, are relatively common at this site with return times of less than 1 year (Table 2). There was no relationship between wind speed and reduction in BV frequency coefficient for the four events at Yuan Yang (not shown). The relationship between the reduction in BV

frequency coefficient and mean daily wind speed at the other sites was less clear than that with rainfall but showed a generally positive relationship (Fig. 5b).

The changes in water column stability ranged from 5 days to 45 days across the sites (Fig. 5c). Lake thermal structure returned to pre-event conditions within 17 days of all mixing events, with the exception of the event in Feeagh, where the reduction in stability and increase in thermocline depth was apparent until the lake fully mixed in September (45 days). The changes in underwater PAR levels at Annie and Pääjärvi were more prolonged, lasting for 56 and 360 days respectively (Table 2). The duration of impacts tended to be longer for events with longer return periods, that is, those that are less frequent and more severe at a site (Fig. 5d; Table 2). The two flood pulse events in Pääjärvi, where peak rainfall was 45 mm day⁻¹ and 50 mm day⁻¹ respectively, had individual return periods of 8 years and 9 years. However, analysis of the precipitation data for the site showed that no two events of this magnitude co-occurred in any other summer in the 32-year record (Table 2).

Discussion

Abrupt changes in weather have long been recognised as drivers of episodic events in lakes, including sudden changes in stability and stratification (Imberger, 1994; Wilhelm & Adrian, 2008), increases in the availability of dissolved nutrients (Drakare *et al.*, 2002; Foreman *et al.*, 2004) and both short-term and longer-term biological responses (Flöder & Sommer, 1999; Hargeby *et al.*, 2004; Paidere *et al.*, 2007). These studies, however, generally report effects for a specific site or event. The case studies that we presented were from lakes that differed in size, trophic status and climatic region. The range in the magnitude of the meteorological drivers, and the number of events occurring in a season, provides insight into the consequences of increases in the severity and the frequency of these drivers across a wide range of sites.

Consequences of weather-related episodic events for abiotic conditions: the importance of high frequency data

The changes in wind speed and rainfall in our case studies were all of short duration, necessitating the use of automated high resolution monitoring to resolve them. Nevertheless, they had rapid and substantial impacts on abiotic conditions within the lakes that persisted for periods varying from several days to an entire year. Two types of effects were identified: (1) generally short-lived effects of even very intense storms on lake thermal structure and (2) more prolonged changes in coloured dissolved organic matter export and underwater light levels following high rainfall. Two of the case studies used in this paper, Blelham and Slotssø, clearly demonstrated the rapid but short-lived consequences of relatively low severity wind speeds for thermal structure. Leane, one of our largest lakes, also re-stratified rapidly after mixing. More surprisingly, some lakes experiencing what might be considered severe conditions (for example, the storms at Yuan Yang and Annie) also re-stratified within

days. Our results also illustrated the compound effects of flood events compared to those events where only an increase in wind speed occurred. A decrease in stability, a deepening of the thermocline, a reduction in underwater PAR levels and a reduction in surface water DO levels all occurred in Annie following Tropical Storm Fay. In addition, where successive flood pulse events occur, as illustrated by the two sequential events in Pääjärvi, the changes in CDOM levels and on underwater PAR levels can be cumulative.

Biological responses to weather-related episodic events

These changes in abiotic conditions also resulted in some cases in rapid biological responses. Decreases in algal biomass occurred in both Slotssø and Leane when wind speeds increased. A decline in surface water DO levels, and in estimated GPP, was coincident with the decrease in Chl *a* at Slotssø. Other reductions in surface water DO levels may have been due, in part, to increased bacterial mineralisation of DOC, for example in Feeagh. In Pääjärvi, where an influx of DOC was recorded but where mixing did not occur, a peak in CO₂ and CH₄ fluxes from the water column was recorded following the 2004 events due to increased mineralisation (Ojala *et al.*, 2011). The bacterial community composition in Yuan Yang was also perturbed immediately following each of the events described in 2005, but recovered to pre-event conditions within 3-4 weeks (Jones *et al.*, 2008). The reductions in light availability in Annie and Pääjärvi would also potentially influence phytoplankton species composition. In Annie, *Chrysophyte* communities dominate in the metalimnion in storm-free, transparent years, while these communities are absent from the lake in years where CDOM concentrations have increased following storms (Battoe, 1985). Such increases in carbon availability, decreases in PAR and increased disturbance all have the potential to shift lake ecosystems away from net autotrophy towards net heterotrophy.

The magnitude of the effects on our case study lakes was related to the intensity of the event, but also in some cases to site-specific characteristics that may reflect lower inherent resilience to such disturbance. While rainfall initiated the deepening of the thermocline in Feeagh, for example, this site experiences a cool oceanic climate, and the persistence of the lower thermocline was likely to have been a function of subsequent wind speed, precipitation and air temperature. The size of the pulse of coloured DOC exported from the Feeagh, Pääjärvi and Annie catchments would depend on the amount of rainfall, but also on the availability of DOC in flow pathways in catchment soils (Vogt and Muniz, 1997; Worrall *et al.* 2002). The magnitude of subsequent changes in lake DOC concentrations, and in underwater PAR levels, would be related to both DOC loading and to lake residence time. Repeated years with frequent storms in Lake Annie have been shown to result in persistent elevation of CDOM levels. Recovery to pre-event levels requires a recovery period without storms, equal to the water residence time of two years (Gaiser *et al.*, 2009b).

Future changes in the severity and frequency of extreme weather conditions

Changes in both the frequency and/or severity of storms are predicted as a result of global climate change. While there is a greater degree of uncertainty associated with future projections for precipitation and wind speed than those for warming (Beniston *et al.*, 2007; Samuelsson, 2010), upward trends in the occurrence of extreme precipitation have already been reported for both Europe (Klein Tank & Können, 1999) and the United States (Kunkel *et al.*, 1999). Overall, the consequences of these changes will depend on the direction of climate change at a given location, and on lake and catchment characteristics. Our humic case study lakes lie in four different climatic regions. For three of these regions, those where Annie, Yuan Yang and Pääjärvi are located, increases in the severity and/or frequency of summer storms are projected (Diffenbaugh *et al.*, 2005; Knutson & Tuley 2004; Walsh,

2004; Beniston *et al.*, 2007; Samuelsson, 2010). In contrast, warmer, drier, and calmer conditions are projected for the Feeagh catchment in summer, with higher rainfall in winter and early spring (Samuelsson, 2010). The bacterial community in lakes which experience frequent storms, such as Yuan Yang, appears to be well adapted to these conditions (Jones *et al.*, 2008, 2009) and changes in intensity may have little effect. However, the occurrence of more intense and frequent storms could lead to longer periods with decreased transparency in lakes such as Annie, which fluctuate between clear-water and more coloured phases (Gaiser *et al.*, 2009a; Gaiser *et al.*, 2009b). Similarly, an increase in extreme precipitation could increase DOC loading and decrease light levels in northern lakes such as Pääjärvi. Although drier and calmer summers are expected at Feeagh, modelling of future DOC export to the lake suggests increased rates of aerobic decomposition in soils and a subsequent increase in annual mean DOC inflow to the lake (Naden *et al.*, 2010).

The three clear-water, eutrophic lakes all lie in western and north-western Europe, a region where drier, calmer conditions are expected in mid to late summer, with higher rainfall in spring and early summer (Christensen *et al.*, 2007; Samuelsson, 2010). Here, mixing events will be rarer, and higher stability could lead to more frequent algal blooms, similar to that experienced in Leane, and less frequent reoxygenation of deeper water. Increased nutrient loading in spring and early summer has also been projected for Leane and would contribute to the potential for blooms (Jennings *et al.*, 2009). However, experimental work at Slotssø has suggested that, even in this clear-water site, predicted changes in climate will drive the lake towards net heterotrophy in summer and autumn (Staehr & Sand-Jensen, 2006, 2007).

These case studies highlight the importance of high frequency data in exploring and quantifying the consequences of such intermittent changes in lakes. The analysis and

synthesis of on-going high frequency measurements, both at GLEON lakes and other sites, will provide further insight into the capacity for lakes to absorb such impacts. The availability of data from a network of sites will also facilitate comparative investigations and allow assessment on both regional and global scales. These insights will be increasingly important given the global nature of many current influences, episodic or chronic, on lake ecosystems, especially those related to climate change.

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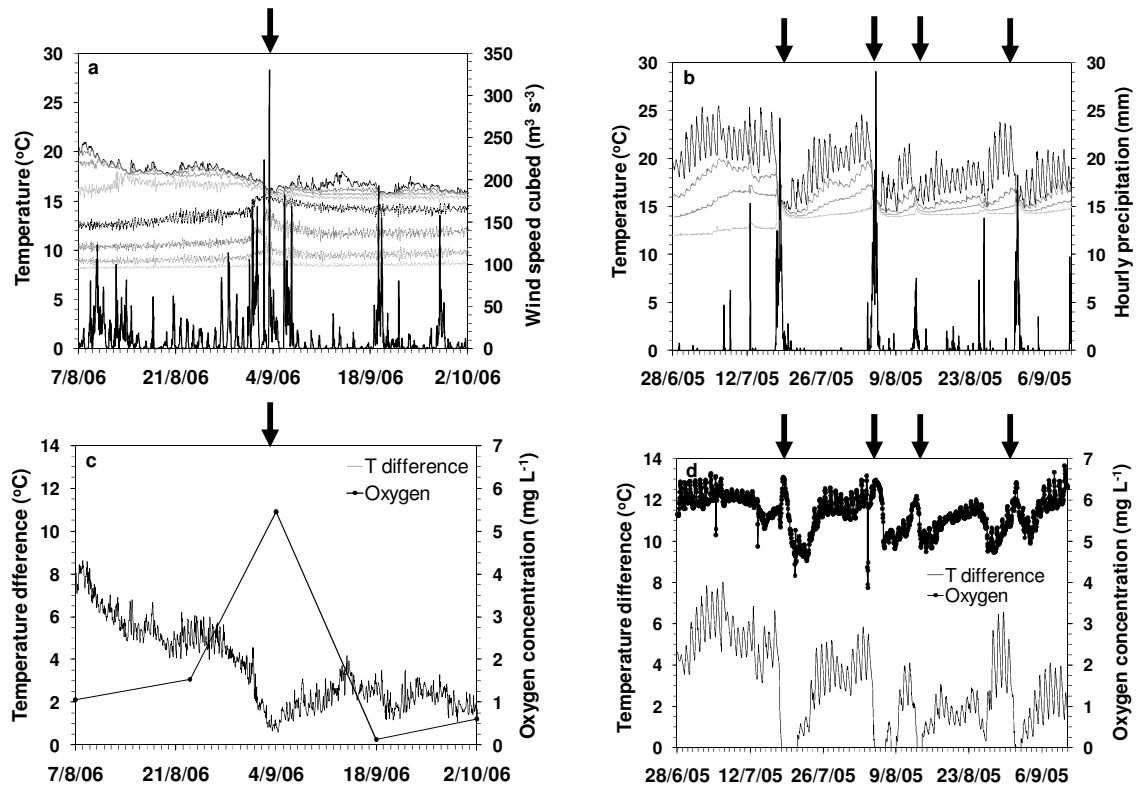


Fig. 1. (a) water temperatures in Blelham at depths of 1–8 m (thin black line – thin grey line and dashed thin black line – dashed thin grey line) and cube of the wind speed (thick black line); (b) temperatures at Yuan Yang at depths of 0–3 m (thin black line – thin grey line) and hourly precipitation (thick black line); (c) temperature difference in Blelham between 1 m and 5 m (thin line) and oxygen concentration at 5 m (thick line and circles); (d) temperature difference in Yuan Yang between epilimnion and hypolimnion (thin line) and oxygen concentration at 0.5 m (thick line and circles). Black arrows indicate timing of change in meteorological driver.

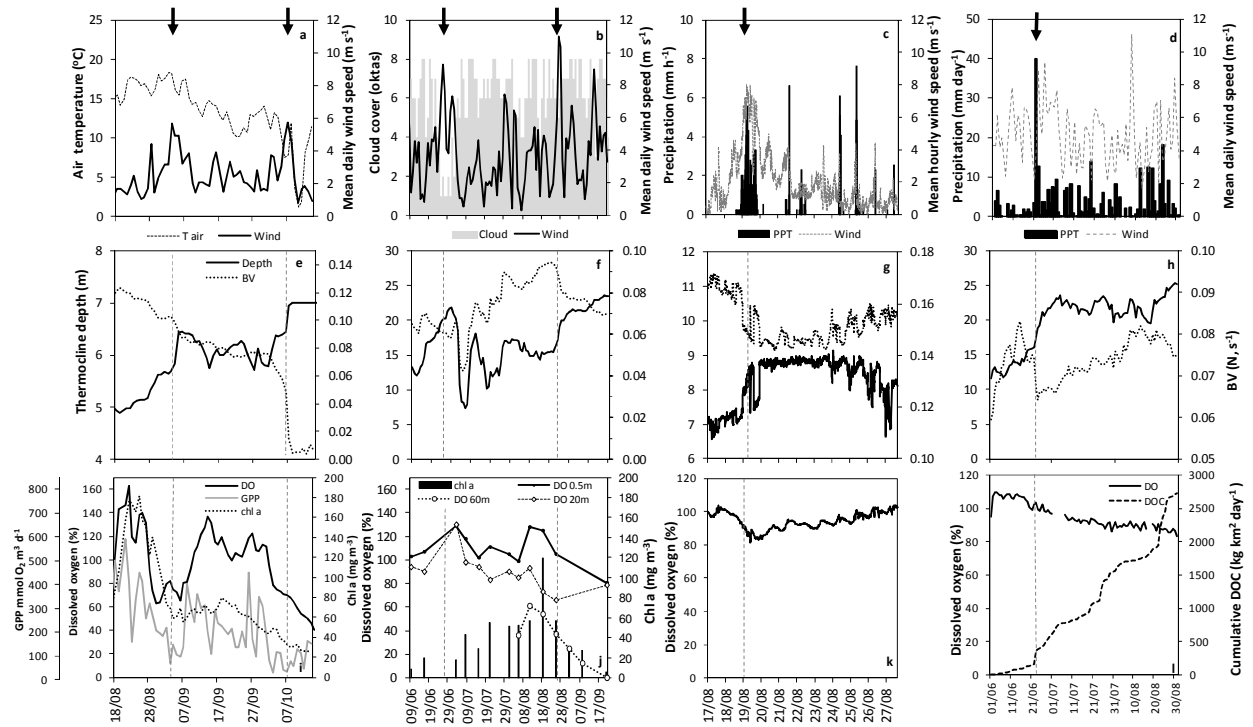


Fig. 2. Episodic events at Slotssø (a, e, i), Leane (b, f, j), Annie (c, g, k) and Feeagh (d, h, l):

meteorological drivers (a to d), Brunt Väisälä (BV) buoyancy frequency and thermocline depth (e to h), dissolved oxygen levels, chlorophyll *a* (Slotssø and Leane only) and gross primary productivity (Slotssø only), and inflow DOC load (Feeagh only) (i to l). Black arrows and grey dashed lines indicate timing of change in meteorological driver.

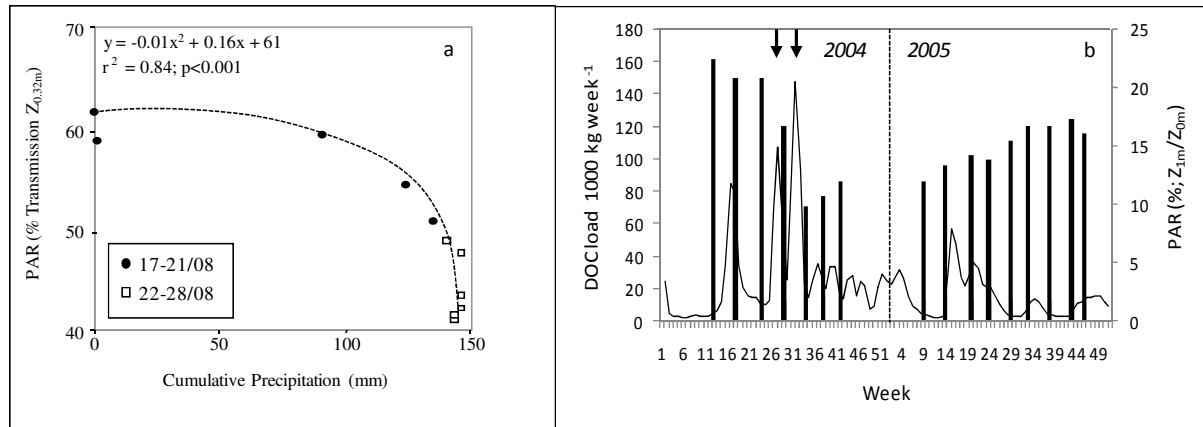


Fig. 3. Short term and longer term changes in underwater PAR levels: (a) PAR (% transmission at 0.32m) plotted against cumulative precipitation (mm) in Annie following Tropical Storm Fay (black circles = 17 to 21 August; open circles = 22 to 28 August); (b) DOC load (1000 kg DOC week⁻¹, black line) and ratio of surface to underwater PAR (at 1m, black bars) in Pääjärvi, 2004 and 2005. Black arrows indicate timing of rainfall events.

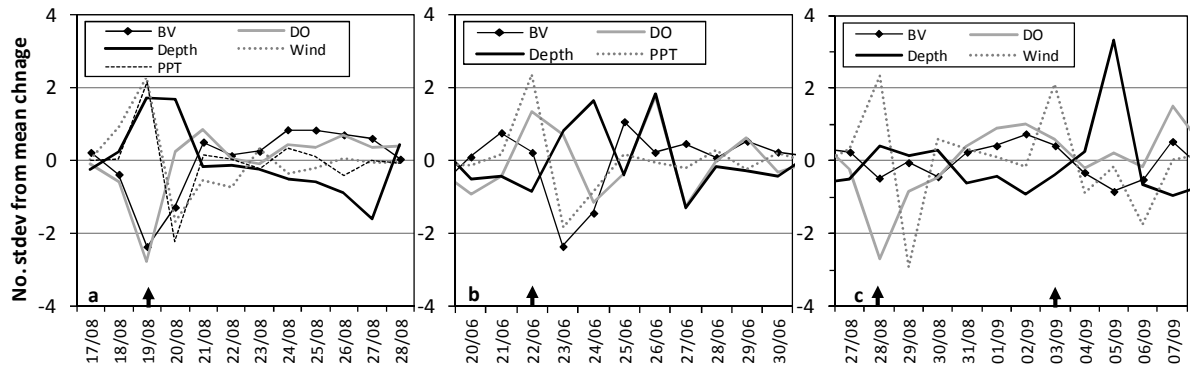


Fig. 4. Three differing patterns in the sequence of relative change (number of standard deviations from mean change) in Brunt-Väisälä (BV) buoyancy frequency, thermocline depth and surface dissolved oxygen (DO) levels following changes in weather: (a) Annie, (b) Feeagh and (c) Slotssø. Black arrows indicate timing of change in meteorological driver.

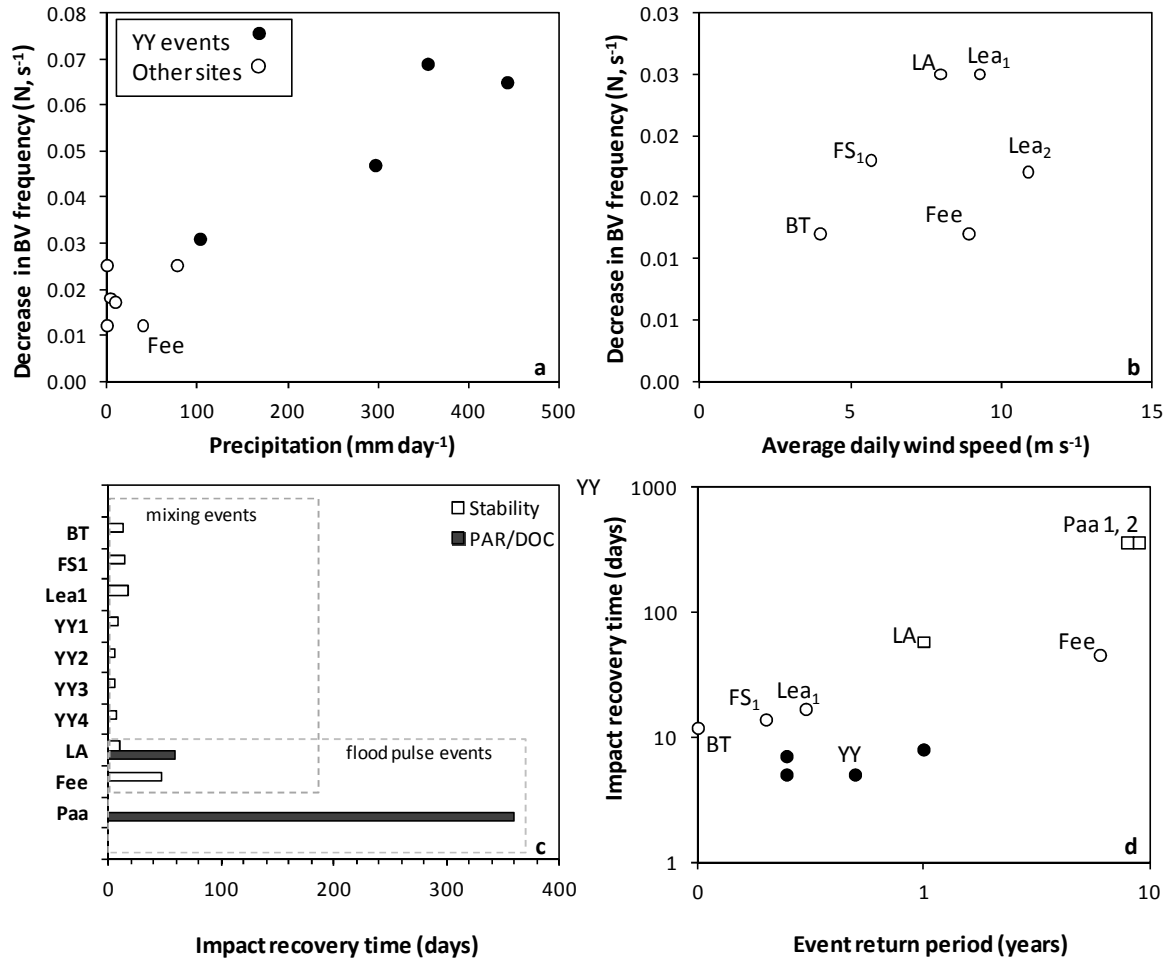


Fig. 5. Relationship between the reduction in BV frequency coefficient (s^{-1}) and daily precipitation ($mm\ day^{-1}$) (a) and wind speed ($m\ s^{-1}$) (b) (Yuan Yang events = black circles, all other sites = open circles); c. time taken for recovery of in-lake parameter following event (impact recovery time, days); d. impact recovery time (days: log scale) plotted against event return period (years: log scale), circles = thermal profile impacts; squares = PAR impacts (BT = Blelham, FS = Slotssø, Fee = Feeagh, LA = Annie, Lea = Leane, Paa = Pääjärvi, YY = Yuan Yang).

Table 1. Location and characteristics for the seven case-study lakes (mono = monomictic, di = dimictic, oligo = oligotrophic, meso = mesotrophic, eu = eutrophic).

Site	Lat	Long	Area (ha)	Max depth (m)	Mean depth (m)	Residence time (days)	Mixing regime	Trophic status	Colour
Yuan Yang <i>Taiwan</i>	24° 35' N	121° 24' E	3.6	4.5	1.7	30	Mono	Oligo	Coloured
Blelham <i>UK</i>	54° 21' N	2° 59' W	10	14.5	6.8	54	Mono	Eu	Clear
Slotssø <i>Denmark</i>	55° 56' N	12° 17' E	22	8	3.5	180	Mono	Eu	Clear
Annie <i>USA</i>	28° 68' N	81° 54' W	37	21	10.0	730	Mono	Oligo	Coloured
Feeagh <i>Ireland</i>	53° 56' N	09° 34' W	390	45	14.5	164	Mono	Oligo	Coloured
Pääjärvi <i>Finland</i>	61° 07' N	25° 13' E	1340	87	14.4	1205	Di	Oligo- meso	Coloured
Leane <i>Ireland</i>	52° 05' N	9° 36' W	1990	64	13.1	204	Mono	Meso-eu	Clear

Table 2. Characteristics of the events including maximum mean daily wind speed (m s^{-1}), maximum daily precipitation (PPT) (mm day^{-1}), number of standard deviations from the seasonal mean for the main meteorological driver, meteorological driver return period (years), pre-event and decrease in Brunt-Väisälä (BV) buoyancy frequency (s^{-1}), recovery time (days) for BV buoyancy frequency, and underwater photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) (na = not applicable; event occurred at end of period of stratification).

Site	Date	Event wind speed	Event PPT	Main event driver	Driver (no. stdev from mean)	Driver return period	Pre-event BV	Decrease BV	BV recovery time	PAR recovery time
		(m s^{-1})	(mm day^{-1})			(years)	(s^{-1})	(s^{-1})	(days)	(days)
Yuan Y.	18/7/05	4.0	442.5	PPT	5	1.0	0.088	0.065	8	
	5/8/05	3.7	354.5	PPT	4	0.5	0.087	0.069	5	
	12/8/05	3.5	102.5	PPT	1	0.3	0.061	0.031	5	
	31/8/05	2.6	296.5	PPT	3	0.3	0.072	0.047	7	
Blelham	4/9/06	4.0	0.1	Wind	3	0.1	0.100	0.012	12	
Slotssø	3/9/06	5.7	0.0	Wind	2	0.2	0.103	0.018	14	
	7/10/06	5.7	8.5	Wind	2	0.2	0.075	0.070	na	
Annie	18/8/08	8.0	77.7	PPT/wind	4	1.0	0.168	0.025	9	56
Feeagh	23/6/04	8.9	39.9	PPT	7	6.0	0.074	0.009	45	
Pääjärvi	30/6/04		45.2	PPT	5	8.0	} ³²			360
	28/7/04		50.3	PPT	5	9.0				
Leane	26/6/97	9.3	0.5	Wind	2	0.3	0.067	0.025	17	
	28/8/97	10.9	9.8	Wind	3	8.0	0.089	0.012	na	